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that peopled all countries except Europe? It is obvious, likewise, that, while coloured tribes were spreading over Africa, southern Asia, and America, white families, the descendants of Shem and Japheth, peopled Asia Minor, the Caucasian territories, great part of northern Asia, and the whole of Europe.

But now we approach the great mystery. Human eyes cannot penetrate further than to this point—the three varieties. The Bible states that these three were derived from one father, Noah; but does not inform us whether they were the sons of one mother. There is nothing contradictory in the supposition that Ham's mother was a descendant of Cain; that "Canaan" was derived from Cain; and that the mark set on Cain and his descendants was negro blackness. Children of white and black parents are not always mulatto; sometimes one colour predominates, or does so in the next generation. The name "Ham" does not imply so deep a black as the word "Cush."

And now, in conclusion, allow me to remark that, however difficult it may be to trace the thread of inspired truth through the encumbrances of human additions and defective translations, that thread is the only clue towards the miraculous commencement of man's existence on this earth.

That such a beginning should have been infantile, or the state of an uninformed savage, common sense at once denies as absurdly inconsistent.

No theory, no creation of man's intellect, has been found less difficult to comprehend, less a subject of marvel, than the statement transmitted to us in the Bible.

II.—*The Assyrian Origin of the Izedis or Yezidis—the so-called "Devil Worshipers"*. By W. FRANCIS AINSWORTH, F.S.A., F.R.G.S., etc.

NEXT to the splendid discoveries effected in recent times by the disentanglement of the monuments of Assyria and Chaldæa, the curiosity and interest of ethnologists might be reasonably supposed to be concerned in the probable existence, in the present day, of descendants of some branches of the Assyrians or Chaldæans of old in the same neighbourhoods.

Such descent is more than probable among some of the permanent dwellers in the country, whether Izedis, Chaldæan Christians, Sabæans, or others. And among the former there exists not only a remarkable likeness in form, feature, and the manner of wearing the hair, to the monumental Assyrians,

but some of the most characteristic practices of the Assyrians are still found to be in vogue amongst them.

These remarkable people are widely diffused throughout Assyria, Mesopotamia, North Syria, Kurdistan, Asia Minor, and Armenia. One of their chief strongholds is the Sinjar mountains, in central Mesopotamia, and several tribes have lately taken refuge from Muhammedan persecution in Georgia; but the residence of their spiritual and temporal head is in the neighbourhood of Nineveh. Their chief place of worship and of pilgrimage—the holy sanctuary to which their eyes turn from all parts of the East; as also their chief place of burial—are in the same neighbourhood. The tribe of Nineveh is regarded as the most noble, and the head of the nation is still looked upon as at once Khalif, Amir, and Sheikh—spiritual and temporal head of the race.

The attention of Europeans was first called in modern times to the existence of this remarkable people by Father Maurizio Garzoni, whose tract respecting them was printed at Berlin in 1807, with the Abbate Sestini's *Viaggi e Opuscoli*, and translated into French by the celebrated De Sacy, who added it as an appendix to M. Rousseau's *Description du Pachalik de Bagdad* published at Paris in 1809. Copious extracts from M. Rousseau's work, and the appendix concerning the Izedis, were also given in Mr. Buckingham's *Travels in Mesopotamia*.

Mr. Rich, formerly British Resident at Baghdad, obtained some further information regarding this singular people during his residence at Nineveh in 1820-21, and the results are published in his *Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan*, etc., vol. ii, p. 68 *et seq.*

The same people attracted the attention of the celebrated traveller Niebuhr; and some notices of their practices, derived from that and other sources, are carefully digested in Mr. Baillie Fraser's little book, *Mesopotamia and Assyria*, ed. of 1842, p. 330 *et seq.*

The writer of the present paper was the first traveller who visited the celebrated sanctuary of the Izedis at Sheikh Adi; this was in 1840, but Mr. Frederick Forbes had previously explored their retreats and fastnesses in the Sinjar, which he has described in the ninth volume of the *Journal* of the Royal Geographical Society. Dr. Grant, of the American Missions, was at or about the same time collecting such observations as have been since consigned in his work on *The Nestorians, or the Lost Tribes*.

The largest amount of information regarding these people has, however, been decidedly since obtained by Mr. Layard, who, having befriended them and protected them through the

ambassador at Constantinople, has received marked attentions at their hands ; he was admitted to the mysterious rites of the festival of Sheikh Adi, was allowed to see their sacred emblem the Melek Taus or king cock, and obtained from their spiritual head, Sheikh Nasr, a variety of interesting and valuable information.

The chief and central place of sojourn of the Izedis is the region which corresponds to what was once Assyria Proper, at the foot of the mountains and in the plains around Nineveh. Their principal strongholds are in this region, where are also the residences of their spiritual and political head at Baadli or Baadri ; their chief sanctuary, Sheikh Adi or Hadi ; and their chief burial place, Bazan.

Their most populous settlements in this region are the villages of Baazani, Baasheikha, and Baadri or Sheikh Khan, whence the whole tribe is in the same region sometimes designated as the Sheikhkanli, as well as the Dassini or Dawassini, that being the name of the district as a Christian episcopacy.

The Izedis are, indeed, generally known amongst themselves by the name of the district in which they respectively dwell. In the Sinjar, they are divided into ten distinct tribes,—the Heska, Mendka, Hubaba, Merkhan, Bukra, Beit Khaled, Amera, Al Dakhi, Semoki, and Kerani ; and their chief places of residence are Semil Bukra, Mirkhan, Osafa, Dinah, Amrah, As-smukiya, Al Kiraniya, Kulkah, and Sinjar itself.

Tribes of Izedis are also met with in the north of Syria, in northern Kurdistan, in Buhtan, and Missuri. Their villages are found in the districts of Julamerik, Amadiya, Jezira ibn Omar, Zakhu, Mardin, and Dyarbekir. They occur, indeed, here and there throughout northern Kurdistan, northern Mesopotamia, and Syria, as also in Armenia and Asia Minor.

A large tribe immigrated within recent times to Georgia and Russian Armenia, to avoid the persecutions of the Muhammedans. According to Baron Haxthausen (*Trans-Caucasia*, p. 257), the Izedis in the Russian territory are divided into two tribes, under hereditary chiefs ; one called itself Hassenzi, and its chief Tamar Agha. The Izedis are, however, all parcelled out into four great divisions, for the purpose of annual visitations by the Kawals ; those of the Sinjar, those of Khurzen or Dyarbekir, those of north Syria, and those of northern Armenia.

The Muhammedans, in their dealings with men of other creeds, make a distinction between such as are believers in the sacred books, and such as have no recognized inspired works. To the first category belong Christians of all denominations, as

receiving the two testaments ; and the Jews, as followers of the old. With Christians and Jews, therefore, they may treat, make peace, and live ; but with such as are included in the second class the good Mussulman can have no intercourse. No treaty nor oath, where they are concerned, is binding. They have the choice between conversion and the sword, and it is unlawful even to take tribute from them. The Izedis not being looked upon as "Masters of a Book," have hence been exposed for centuries to the persecution of the Muhammedans. The harems of the south of Turkey have been recruited from them. Yearly expeditions have been made by the governors of provinces into their districts ; and, whilst the men and women were slaughtered without mercy, the children of both sexes were carried off, and exposed for sale in the principal towns. These annual hunts were one of the sources of revenue of Badir Khan Bey ; and it was the custom of the Pashas of Baghdad and Mosul to let loose the Bashi Bazuks upon the ill-fated Izedis, as an easy method of satisfying their demands for arrears of pay. This system was still practised to a certain extent to within a very short time ago, and gave rise to atrocities scarcely equalled in the better known African slave trade.

It was not unnatural that the Izedis, on their side, should revenge themselves, whenever an opportunity might offer, upon their oppressors. They formed themselves into bands, and were long the terror of the country. No Mussulman that fell into their hands was spared. Caravans were plundered, and travellers murdered without mercy. Christians, however, were not molested ; for the Izedis looked upon them as fellow sufferers for religion's sake.

The last independent chief of the Izedis was Ali Bey, the father of Hussain Bey. He was beloved by his tribe, and sufficiently brave and skilful in war to defend them for many years against the attacks of the Kurds and Mussulmans of the plain. The powerful Bey of Rawandiz, who had united most of the Kurdish tribes of the surrounding mountains under his banner, and had defied for many years the Turks and the Persians, resolved, however, to crush the hateful sect of the Izedis. Ali Bey's forces were greatly inferior in numbers to those of his persecutor. He was defeated, and fell into the hands of the Rawandiz chief, who put him to death. The inhabitants of Sheikh Khan fled to Mosul. It was in spring ; the river had overflowed its banks, and the bridge of boats had been removed. A few succeeded in crossing the stream ; but a vast crowd of men, women, and children were left upon the opposite side, and congregated on the great mound of Kou-

yunjik. The Bey of Rawandiz followed them. An indiscriminate slaughter ensued; and the people of Mosul beheld, from their terraces, the murder of these unfortunate fugitives, who cried to them in vain for help, for both Christians and Mussulmans are said to have rejoiced in the extermination of an odious and infidel sect, and no arm was lifted in their defence. Hussain Bey, having been carried by his mother to the mountains, escaped the general slaughter. He was carefully brought up by the Izedis, and from his infancy has been regarded as their chief.

The inhabitants of the Sinjar were soon afterwards subdued by Muhammed Rashid Pasha, and a second time by Hafiz Pasha. On both occasions there was a massacre, and the population was reduced by three-fourths. The Izedis took refuge in caves, where they were either suffocated by fires lighted at the mouth, or destroyed by discharges of cannon.

Since the establishment of a British vice-consulate at Mosul, several opportunities have presented themselves to Mr. Rassam of protecting these poor people. When Kiritli Oglu, Muhammed Pasha, was in power, the Izedis were among the objects of his cupidity and tyranny. He seized by treachery, as he supposed, their head or high priest; but Sheikh Nasr had time to escape the plot against him, and to substitute in his place the second in authority, who was carried a prisoner to the town. Such is the attachment shown by the Izedis to their chief, that the deceit was not revealed, and the substitute bore with resignation the tortures and imprisonment inflicted upon him. Mr. Rassam having been applied to, obtained his release by advancing a considerable sum of money, which the inhabitants of the district of Sheikh Khan undertook to repay, in course of time, out of the produce of their fields. They punctually fulfilled the engagement thus entered into, and have ever since looked to the British consul as their protector.

The villages of the Izedis are generally distinguished by their tombs, which are built in the form of a fluted cone or pyramid, standing upon a quadrangular basis, which rises in distinct steps or terraces. This form has been said to have been adopted to propitiate the Evil Spirit, and the obelisk, as elsewhere, to represent a flame of fire; but the basis appears to be a relic of the well known Assyrian and Chaldæan architecture,—the counterpart, on a small scale, of the temples, remains of which are still scattered over the country, and which at the Birs-i-Nimrud consisted of seven stages, devoted to the seven planets. These sepulchral monuments are generally neatly whitewashed, and, being placed on an eminence or in the centre of dark olive groves, they present a very picturesque appearance.

The mausoleum of Sheikh Rumi in Sinjar, a place of pilgrimage like Sheikh Adi, is said by Forbes to be prettily situated in a grove of bay trees. Another, on the crest of the hill going from Mirkhan to the Shomal, is also described as being in a grove of trees. The walls were also hung with the horns of sheep, slain in sacrifice by occasional pilgrims. A similar practice was observed by Layard at the tomb of the Kawal Hussain, also in Sinjar.

Certain springs are also objects of veneration and the scene of sacrifices among the Izedis. Such are the springs of Baasheikha, at the foot of the line of hills which front the Jebel Maklub, and Ain u Safra, or "the yellow spring," at the foot of the latter range. The Izedis make pilgrimages to these springs at certain times, several thousands together, including men, women, and children, upon which occasions they offer sacrifices and play at martial games.

At Sheikh Adi there is a spring of water which falls into a basin, and which is used as their chief baptismal font. Niebuhr relates that they were in the habit of throwing into it gold and silver in honour of the Sheikh; but this practice being discovered by a Nestorian in the neighbourhood, he contrived one night to enter the enclosure in pursuit of these treasures. The daughter of the keeper, having accidentally gone thither to draw water, while the thief was searching in the reservoir, conceived it could be no other than Sheikh Adi himself come to inspect the offerings, and hastened away to tell the extraordinary news. The guardians of the sanctuary were enchanted with the honour done them by their saint, while the Nestorian took care to keep his secret and the money.

There is said to be a similar basin in Sinjar, probably the same as that described by Forbes as situated at the foot of the precipice which is surmounted by the village of Kolgha, and which was applied to the same uses. This is said to have come to the ears of the celebrated Sulaiman, Pasha of Baghdad, who, thinking he could turn the Sheikh's treasure to account, visited the place with a powerful force. But though he succeeded in dispersing the Sinjarlis, and put many to the torture of the bastinado, he failed in discovering the treasure.

This holy character with which certain springs are invested appears to be of Assyrian origin. The whole of the ravine of Bavian, near Sheikh Adi, is supposed by Layard (*Discoveries*, p. 215) to have been a sacred spot, devoted by the Assyrians of old to religious ceremonies and to national sacrifices. Here, among other monuments of bygone times, there exist a series of basins cut in the rock, and descending in steps to the river Gomel. The water had been originally led from one to the

other through small conduits, the lowest of which was ornamented at its mouth with two rampant lions in relief. A drawing of this holy well of the Assyrians accompanies Mr. Layard's descriptions. The outlets were choked up, but they were cleared, and, by pouring water into the upper basin, the fountain was restored as it had been in the time of the Assyrians.

At the entrance of one of the deep ravines which runs into the Jebel Maklub, a clear spring gushes from a grotto in the hill side. Tradition assigns to this grotto, with those at Ephesus and Tarsus, as well as elsewhere, the privilege of being the cave of the Seven Sleepers, and the Izedis have also made the spot a place of pilgrimage.

Mr. Rich says, "From what I have seen and heard of the Yezids, they seem lively, brave, hospitable, and good-humoured. Under the British government much might be made of them." Mr. Fraser adds that they are well made and comely. Kinneir also describes them as possessed of noble and generous principles. Dr. Grant speaks of them as "friendly towards the professors of Christianity."

The writer's impressions were of the same favourable description. (*Travels and Researches*, vol. ii, p. 189.) As a race of men, they are tall, slim, and well made; their bones large, and features spare, but marked with much earnestness and decision. The brows advance over the eye, the forehead is high but retreating, the nose prominent, the lips moderate.

Forbes speaks of the Izedis as being in their domestic manners and their customs very simple. Both men and women, he says, are of middle size, and have a clear complexion, with regular features, and black eyes and hair; their limbs being spare, muscular, and well proportioned.

The same traveller also remarks of them that their character is rather superior to that of their neighbours of Mesopotamia. They are brave, hospitable, and sober, faithful to their promises, and much attached to their native soil: but, he adds, they are at the same time cruel and vindictive, considering their proper means of support to be robbery and theft; and they treat with great ferocity any unfortunate Muhammedans who fall into their power, especially Persians. That, however, we have before observed, was a mere matter of reprisals, the natural result of years of oppression and persecution.

The Izedis are, by one of their religious laws, forbidden to wear the common Eastern shirt open in front, and this article of apparel is always closed up to the neck. This is a distinctive mark of the sect, by which its members may be recognized at a glance.

Layard describes the Izedis of Sinjar as having a dark complexion, black and piercing eyes, and frequently a fierce and forbidding countenance. The men being of small stature, but well proportioned limbs, strongly knit together, and muscular, active, and capable of bearing great fatigue.

Their dress consists of a shirt, loose trousers, and cloak, all white, and a black turban, from beneath which their hair falls in ringlets. Their long rifles are rarely out of their hands, and they carry pistols in their girdles, a sword at their sides, and a row of cartouche cases, generally made of cut reeds, in their breasts. These additions to their costume, and their swarthy features, give them a peculiar warlike appearance.

Haxthausen describes the Russian Izedis as well formed, large, and muscular, with finely-arched eyebrows, black eyes, aquiline noses, and a rather broad countenance.

Nothing can be more Assyrian than the above descriptions. The manly forms, aquiline noses, arched eyebrows, and ringleted hair are to be seen on most of the Assyrian monuments.

The language in use amongst the Izedis is a Kurdish dialect, and very few, except the Sheikhs and Kawals, are acquainted with Arabic. The chants and hymns, the only form of prayer which it appears they possess, are, however, in Arabic. They have, it is said, notwithstanding the assertions of the Muhammedans to the contrary, a sacred volume, which contains their traditions, their hymns, directions for the performance of their rites, and other matters connected with their religion. It is said to be preserved either at Baazani or Baasheikha, but is regarded with so much superstitious reverence that Mr. Layard, who enjoyed the friendship and esteem of the Izedis in so great a degree, failed to obtain a perusal or even a sight of it. Dr. Forbes previously noticed the existence of this sacred book, which, he says, is called "Aswad," or "the Black;" but, he adds, as the book has never been seen by any one, it is probable that they have invented the statement for the honour of their religion, since one cause of the great contempt in which they are held by the Muhammedans is their want of any written law.

The year after Mr. Layard's first visit to Sheikh Adi, a poem of the Izedis was shown through Mr. Christian Rassam to the Rev. Mr. Badger; and the same MS. was also shewn to Mr. Layard on the occasion of that gentleman's second visit to Sheikh Adi. This poem is a metrical rhapsody on the merits and attributes of Sheikh Adi, who is at one time identified with the Deity himself, at another as his prophet or vicegerent. We have now two versions of this poem, one by the Rev. Mr. Badger, in his work on *The Nestorians and*

their Rituals; the other by Mr. Hormuzd Rassam, in Layard's *Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 89. It is called the recitation or poem of Sheikh Adi.

Kawal Yusuf informed Mr. Layard that before the great massacre of the sect by the Bey of Rawandiz, they possessed many books, which were either lost during the general panic, or destroyed by the Kurds. He admitted that the "Poem" was only a fragmentary composition, and by no means the "Book" which contained the theology and religious laws of the people. He even hinted that the great work did still exist, and Mr. Layard says, "I am by no means certain that there is not a copy at Baashaikhah or Baazani." The account given by the Kawal seems to be confirmed by the allusion made in the poem to the "Book of Glad Tidings," and the "Book that comforteth the oppressed," which could scarcely have been inserted for any particular purpose, such as to deceive their Muhammedan neighbours.

The actual religious as well as the political head of the Izedis, wherever they may reside, is Hussain Bey, who is called the Khalifa, and he holds this position by inheritance. On his first visit to Sheikh Adi, Mr. Layard described Hussain Bey as the political chief, and Sheikh Nasr as the religious head; but he subsequently found that the religious duties were deputed to the Sheikh only on account of the youth of Hussain Bey. Another Sheikh, called Jindi, also officiated for the Bey at Sheikh Adi. Rich had before stated that the Khan of Sheikh Khan or Baadli was the Pope of the Yezids. He said he was descended from the family of the Ummyad Khalifs, and was esteemed the Amir Hadji of the Yezids. Did the Izedis give a prince to the Khalifat, or are we to believe that this Izedi prince is really a descendant of the Umniyads? The latter is very unlikely, as their Muhammedanism would be then a matter of the deepest pride, instead of being altogether a matter of doubt, if not an assumed thing.

The Izedis have four orders of priesthood,—the Pirs, the Sheikhs, the Kawals or Cawals, and the Fakirs: and, what is very remarkable, these offices are hereditary and descend to females, who, whilst enjoying them, are treated with the same respect and consideration as the men.

The Pirs, or Saints, are most revered, after the great Sheikh or religious head of the sect. They do not appear so much to be an order of priesthood as to be Sheikhs who, in their superior sanctity, have been honoured with a kind of living canonization. They are believed to have the power of curing diseases, and performing other miracles.

The Sheikhs are the only literate men among the Izedis,

being expected to know something of Arabic, the language in which, as before observed, the hymns are written. Their dress should be entirely white, except the skull cap beneath their turbans, which is black. They also wear a band of red and yellow or red and orange plaid round their bodies, as the insignia of their office.

The Kawals, or Preachers, go from village to village as teachers of the doctrines of the sect. They perform on the flute and tambourine, both instruments being looked upon, to a certain extent, as sacred; they also dance at festivals. They usually know a little Arabic, but barely more than is necessary to get through their chants and hymns. Their robes are generally white, although coloured stuffs are not forbidden. Their turbans, unlike those of the Sheikhs, are black, as are also their skull caps.

The Fakirs wear coarse dresses of black or dark brown cloth or canvas, descending to the knee, and fitting tightly to the person; and a black turban, across or over which is tied a red handkerchief. They perform all menial offices connected with the mausoleum of Sheikh Adi, trim and light the votive lamps, and keep the sacred buildings clean.

Forbes says the chief Sheikh has an assessor or adviser, called Sheik Kutchuk, or lesser Sheik, who is supposed to receive the direct revelations of the devil, and, on payment of a sum of money, delivers his oracular counsel to those who consult him, after a pretended sleep, with sometimes a delay of two or three nights.

Layard could not ascertain any particulars regarding the great saint of the Izedis, Sheikh Adi or Hadi; even the epoch of his existence is doubtful. Sheikh Nasr merely asserted on one occasion that he lived before Muhammed.

The Izedis have some foolish traditions connected with him, chiefly relating to his interviews with celestial personages, and to a feat he performed in bringing the springs, now rising in the valley in which his tomb stands, from the well of Zemzem, at Mecca.

The tomb of this saint, so much venerated by the Izedis, stands in a courtyard, and is surrounded by a few buildings, inhabited by the guardians and servants of the sanctuary. The interior is divided into three principal compartments;—a large hall, partitioned in the centre by a row of columns and arches, and having at the upper end a reservoir filled by an abundant spring issuing from the well; and two smaller apartments, in which are the tombs of the saint and of some inferior personage.

The coffin of Sheikh Adi is covered, as has been observed in

the Chaldæan sanctuaries, by a large square case, made of clay and plastered, an embroidered green cloth being thrown over it.

The outer court is enclosed by low buildings with recesses, similar to those in an Eastern bazaar; they are intended for the accommodation of pilgrims, and for the stalls of pedlars, during the celebration of the festival.

Around the mausoleum, and beneath the trees which grow on the sides of the mountain, are numerous rudely constructed edifices, each belonging to an Izedi district or tribe. The pilgrims, according to the place from which they come, reside in them during the time of the feast, so that each portion of the valley is known by the name of the country or tribe of those who resort there.*

With regard to the religious belief and practices of the Izedis, Layard tells us that they recognize one Supreme Being; but he adds, "as far as I could learn, they do not offer up any direct prayer or sacrifice to Him. Sheikh Nasr endeavoured to evade my questions on this subject, and appeared to shun with superstitious awe every topic connected with the existence and attributes of the Deity."

They are said to hold the Old Testament in great reverence, and to believe in the cosmogony of Genesis, the Deluge, and other events recorded in the Bible. They are also said not to reject the New Testament nor the Kuran, but to consider them less entitled to their veneration.

In their religious services, they chaunt hymns in praise of the Deity, succeeded by others in honour of Malek Isa and Sheikh Adi.

The most remarkable fact in the religious creed and practices of the Izedis, that they worship Satan, or, at all events, reverence the Evil Spirit to a degree amounting to worship,

* Mr. Layard gives a highly animated and picturesque description of the arrival of the tribes. "Long lines of pilgrims", he says, "toiled up the avenue. There was the swarthy inhabitant of the Sinjar, with his long black locks, his piercing eye and regular features,—his white robes floating in the wind, and his unwieldy matchlock thrown over his shoulders. Then followed the more wealthy families of the Koohers—the wandering tribes who live in tents in the plains, and among the tribes of ancient Adiabene; the men in gay jackets and variegated turbans, with fantastic arms in their girdles; the women richly clad in silk antans; their hair, braided up in many tresses, falling down their backs, and adorned with wild flowers; their foreheads almost concealed by gold and silver coins; and huge strings of glass beads, coins, and *engraved stones*, hanging round their necks. Next would appear a poverty-stricken family from a village of the Musul district; the women clad in white, pale and careworn; bending under the weight of their children; the men urging on the heavily-laden donkey. Similar groups descended from the hills. Repeated discharges of fire-arms, and a well-known signal, announced to those below the arrival of every new party."

This regard paid to the engraved stones and cylinders of the Assyrians, and which is peculiar to the Izedis, might alone be adduced as a remarkable proof of their Assyrian origin.

is generally admitted by all those who dwell in the same countries with them, of all sects and persuasions, be they Jews, Christians, or Muhammedans. They are expressly designated by the latter as *Shaitan purust*, worshippers of the devil, and they are said to invoke Satan by the name of Chelib or Lord. (Fraser, *Mesopotamia and Assyria*, p. 327.)

Layard corroborates what has been so frequently alluded to by others, that the name of the Evil Spirit is never mentioned by the Izedis; and he adds that any allusion to it by others so vexes and irritates them, that it is said they have put to death persons who have wantonly outraged their feelings by its use. So far is their dread of offending the evil principle carried, that they carefully avoid every expression which may resemble in sound the name of Satan, or the Arabic word for "accursed." Thus, in speaking of a river, they will not say *Shat*, because it is too nearly connected with the first syllable in *Shaitan*, the Devil, but they substitute *Nahr*. Nor, for the same reason, will they utter the word *Kaitan*, thread or fringe. *Naal*, a horse shoe, and *Naal-band*, a farrier, are also forbidden words, because they approach to *Laan*, a curse, and *Maalun*, accursed.

The same writer tells us that they believe Satan to be the chief of the angelic host, now suffering punishment for his rebellion against the Divine will; but still all-powerful, and to be restored hereafter to his high estate in the celestial hierarchy. He must be conciliated and revered, they say; for, as he now has the means of doing evil to mankind, so will he hereafter have the power of rewarding them.

Forbes says, "The first and most important principles of the Izedis are to propitiate the devil and secure his favour, and to support and defend themselves by the sword. They consider the devil as the chief agent in executing the will of God, and reverence Moses, Christ, and Muhammed, as well as the saints and prophets held in veneration by Christians and Mussulmans, believing that all these were more or less perfect incarnations of Satan."

Haxthausen, speaking of the Russian Izedis, says that they believe that Satan (*Shaitan*) was the first-created, greatest, and most exalted of the archangels; that the world was made by him at God's command, and that to him was entrusted its government; but that, for esteeming himself equal with God, he was banished from the Divine presence. Nevertheless, he will be again received in favour, and his kingdom (this world) restored to him. They suffer no one to speak ill of Satan; if the Tatar Muhammedan curse, *Nalat Shaitanna*—accursed be Satan, be uttered in their presence, they are bound to slay either the speaker or themselves. On a certain day they offer

to Satan thirty sheep. Christ, they say, is merciful, and his favour easily procured; but Satan is not so easily propitiated.

Haxthausen further relates that, questioning the Russian Izedis concerning this doctrine, he was asked by a white-bearded Izedi, "Dost thou believe that God is righteous and all-merciful?" "Yes," replied the Baron. "Was not Satan the best beloved of all the archangels?" resumed the questioner; "and will not God take pity on him who has been exiled so many thousand years, and restore to him the dominion over the world he created? Will not Satan then reward the poor Izedis, who alone have never spoken ill of him, and have suffered so much for him?" "Martyrdom," exclaims the German traveller, "for the rights of Satan!—strange confusion of ideas, with something, nevertheless, touching."*

* Fraser relates a curious legend which exists in Seistan, among the inhabitants of which are not only many fire-worshippers, ghabirs or ghebres, but a considerable number of these Shaitan purust or devil-worshippers. The account is as follows:—

"In former times there existed, they say, a prophet named Hanlalah, whose life was prolonged to the measure of a thousand years. He was their ruler and benefactor; and as by his agency their flocks gave birth to young miraculously once a week, though ignorant of the use of money, they enjoyed all the comforts of life with much gratitude to him. At length, however, he died, and was succeeded by his son, whom Satan, presuming on his inexperience, tempted to sin, by entering into a large mulberry tree (a remarkably fine mulberry tree throws its shade in the present day over the court at Sheikh Adi), from whence he addressed the successor of Hanlalah, and called on him to worship the prince of darkness. Astonished, yet unshaken, the youth resisted the temptation. But the miracle proved too much for the constancy of his flock, who began to turn to the worship of the devil. The young prophet, enraged at this, seized an axe and a saw, and prepared to cut down the tree, when he was arrested by the appearance of a human form, who exclaimed, 'Rash boy, desist! turn to me, and let us wrestle for the victory. If you conquer, then fell the tree.'

"The prophet consented, and vanquished his opponent; who, however, bought his own safety and that of the tree by the promise of a large weekly treasure. After seven days, the holy victor again visited the tree, to claim the gold or fell it to the ground; but Satan persuaded him to hazard another struggle, on promise that if conquered again the amount should be doubled. The second encounter proved fatal to the youth, who was put to death by his spiritual antagonist; and the result confirmed the tribes over whom he had ruled in the worship of the tree and its tutelary demon."

In this legend, Mr. Fraser remarks, the leading doctrine of all these Eastern religions—the constant contention between the powers of good and evil—is plainly shadowed forth, with the additional moral that, as long as he was actuated by a disinterested zeal for religion, the young prophet was victorious over the spirit of evil, but failed so soon as that zeal gave place to a sordid cupidity for earthly treasure.

The "tree", it is also to be observed, occupies a prominent place in all the religions of the East—Chinese, Hindu, Persian, or Arabian. It figures largely in the Babylonian and Assyrian sculptures. Needless to remark what an important place it also fills in the Jewish history of our first parents.

This legend becomes still more interesting when compared with the following passage, which is taken from Assemani (vol. iii, p. 493), in the part where he treats of the religions of Mesopotamia and Assyria:—"According to the natives of the country, the Yezidis were at one time Christians, who, however, in the

Mr. Rich says of the Izedis, "The church, conventicle, or whatever it may be called, is said to resemble that at Jerusalem, every different tribe of Izedis having its own separate station

course of ages, had forgotten even the fundamental principles of their faith. I am, nevertheless, not inclined to believe this their origin; for I am of opinion that the word Yezidi is derived from Yezid, which in the idiom of Persia signifies *God*. Yezidi, the plural of Yezid, indicates the observers of superstitious doctrines (as may be seen from Antonio Gyges, *Tesoro della lingua Arabica*). Yezid was, in fact, the name of the idol which Elias, bishop and missionary of Mogham, overthrew with three blows of an axe; and this fact sustains the opinion I have advanced. Monseigneur Tommaso, bishop of Marquise, who lived in the commencement of the ninth century, relates that when this Elias, after having been chosen bishop of Mogham—a city on the frontiers of Persia, and near the Caspian sea—proceeded to enter on the duties of his diocese, he found it occupied by a barbarous people, immersed in superstition and idolatry.

"The bishop, however, commenced his instructions; and his flock confessed that they received them with pleasure, were convinced of their truth, and were inclined to return to the true God, but that they were terrified at the thought of abandoning Yezid, the object of religious veneration of their ancestors. This idol, they said, conscious of approaching rejection and contempt, would not fail to revenge itself by their total destruction. Elias desired to be led to this object of their adoration. They conducted him to the summit of a neighbouring hill, from whence a dark wood extended into the valley below. From the bosom of this rose a plane-tree of enormous height, majestic in the spread of its boughs and deep obscurity of its shade; but, transported with holy zeal, he demanded a hatchet, and rushing to the valley, sought the idol, whom he found lowering with a dark and menacing aspect. Nothing daunted, however, he raised the axe, smote down the image of the prince of darkness, and continued his work till not only was the mighty tree laid prostrate, but every one of the numerous younger shoots, termed by the barbarians the children of Yezid, were likewise demolished."

The similarity of these two legends, coming from such opposite quarters, is very remarkable, and can scarcely be quite accidental. It may be from some confusion of persons that the Izedis fast three days upon the winter festival of Khidr Ilyas or Elias (see Rich, p. 69). Such a confusion of names is not uncommon in the East. That excellent orientalist the Rev. Mr. Renouard, says, for example, in allusion to a tomb called Khidr Ilyas, or Khizr Ilyas, at Angora, that it is the name of a Turkish saint and hero, confounded by the Turks with St. George and the prophet Elias. (*Journal, Royal Geo. Society*, vol. ix, p. 273.)

We are aware, also, from D'Herbelot, as substantiated by Sir Henry Rawlinson (*Journal of Royal Geo. Society*, vol. ix, p. 36), that the tomb of Baba Yadgar, in the pass of Zardah, which is the chief sanctuary of the Ali Ilahis, a mountaineer sect whose faith bears evident marks of Judaism, singularly amalgamated with Sabæan, Christian, and Muhammedan legends, was regarded at the time of the Arab invasion of Persia as the abode of Elias. (See D'Herbelot, in the titles *Holwan* and *Zerib Bar Elia*.)

Mr. Rich, alluding to one of these Khidr Ilyases much venerated by the Kurds on the frontiers of Sulaimaniyah, that they are not so much tombs as resting places of the prophet Elias. The notion that Elijah never died, and that he is still on the earth, where he is to remain until the coming of Jesus Christ, is common to many Jews, Mohammedans, and other Eastern sects. The prophecy that Elijah should come "before the great and terrible day of the Lord", has probably given rise to the notion that he had not yet completed his part on earth. The wisest rabbis have taught that Elias sits under the *tree of life* in Paradise, and keeps account of the good works of the Jews, especially of their sabbath observances. Jesus Himself was taken for Elias, reappearing after nine centuries of concealment. (See Buxtorf's *Synagoga Judaica*, Basle, 1641, pp. 80, 255.)

It is on account of this everlasting life, supposed to be enjoyed by Elias, that

in it. Their Pir, or Sheikh, reads prayers, every one at intervals crying out, Amen, and this is the whole of their worship. It is true that they pay adoration, or at least a sort of worship, to Malik Taus, the figure of a bird placed on a kind of candlestick. (This figure, he adds in a note, is that of a *cock*, and is produced but once a year for the purpose of worship.) They will not spit into the fire, or blow out a candle with their breaths. When the sun just appears above the horizon, they salute it with three prostrations. When they are taxed by the Christians and Turks with having no books, they say it is because God has so peculiarly enlightened their minds as to render books and a written law unnecessary."

Next to Satan, among the Izedis, but inferior to him in might and wisdom, are seven archangels, who exercise a great influence over the world; they are Gabrael, Michael, Raphael, Azrael, Dedrael, Azraphael, and Shemkeel. Upon this Layard remarks, "It will be remembered that in the Book of Tobit (ch. xii, v. 15) Raphael is made to say,—“I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One.” “The seven spirits before the throne of God” are mentioned in Revelations (ch. i, v. 4; ch. iv, v. 5.)

This number of seven, in the hierarchy of the celestial host, as in many other sacred things, appears to have been connected with Babylonian, Assyrian, and Chaldæan traditions and celestial observations.*

the Muhammedans call him Khidr, or *evergreen*. D'Herbelot relates that Elias appeared to Fadilah, a chief of the Arabs, at the resting place in the pass of Zardah, before alluded to, upon the occasion of the capture of Holwan, in the sixteenth year of the Hegira. It is in reference to this superstition, that a Turkish poet observes, “keep yourselves from believing that this world is your home; your home is in heaven alone; strive, therefore, by the means of virtue to reach that home where Elias dwells, and where a place is prepared for you.”

* Thus Sir Henry Rawlinson has ascertained by the denudation of the Birs-i-Nimrud, that the Babylonian temples consisted of seven stages, each dedicated to one of the planets, and coloured externally with the colours attributed to the seven planets in the works of the Sabæan astrologers, and traditionally handed down from the Chaldeans.

Thus we had also the seven walls of Ecbatana, described by Herodotus as being of the seven colours, which, among the Eastern nations, denoted the seven great heavenly bodies, or the seven climates in which they revolve.

Thus Nizami, in his poem of the Hest Peiker, describes a seven-bodied palace, built by Bahram Gur, nearly in the same terms as Herodotus. The palace dedicated to Saturn, he says, was black; that of Jupiter, orange, or more strictly sandal-wood colour (in Persian, sandali; in Greek, *σανδαρίχινος*); of Mars, scarlet; of the sun, golden; of Venus, white; of Mercury, azure; and of the moon, green, a hue which is applied by the orientals to silver.

The number seven was of great importance among the Jews. There were seven offerings in making a covenant, seven lamps in the golden candlestick, seven trumpets, seven lamps, seven seals. Balaam ordered seven ram altars to be erected. There were seven spirits before the throne. The Hebrew root from whence the numeral is derived gives the idea of sufficiency and fulness. It was considered a fortunate number among the Persians. Cicero calls it the knot

Father Garzoni appears to have been the first among modern travellers who called attention to the singular fact of the Izedis paying adoration, or at least a sort of worship, to the figure of a bird placed on a kind of candlestick, and called Melek Tâus. Mr. Rich and Mr. Fraser corroborated the fact. "Once a year," says the latter, "they worship the figure of a cock, which is called Malik Tâus, placed before the assembly on a sort of candlestick." Since that time, the same fact has been attested by numerous missionaries and travellers.

Unfortunately, some discrepancy has arisen in the translation of the word Melek Tâus, from the convertibility of the vowels, as well as in the orthography, as also the several meanings of the same word, in oriental languages. Melek means king in Hebrew, and malâk, angel. Hence Melek Tâus has been translated by Hyde (*Vet. Pers. Relig. Hist.*, p. 518) as "angel peacock;" by Layard, in the same page (*Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. i, p. 245), as both "king" and "angel;" and by the Rev. Dr. Justin Perkins, missionary of American Board, "mighty angel" (see *Miss. Her.* Feb. 1838, p. 53). But almost all others translate it king cock, or king peacock. Melek, pronounced malik, is a term still used among the Khaldis to designate their chiefs,—in the sense of king, not of angels. A writer in the *Journal* of the American Oriental Society (vol. iii, p. 502) says: "The grammatical interpretation of Melek Tâus, 'king peacock,' we may now consider as established." So far true, but Tâus is also used for the cock simply, as well as for peacock; just as Taok signifies in the Kurdish and Turkish languages poultry generally. It is also used sometimes in the general sense of a bird, and the Taochians, mentioned by Xenophon as met with in Georgia, appear to have been so called from their living like birds, perched on high mountain fortresses.*

and cement of all things, as being that by which the natural and spiritual world are comprehended in one idea. (*Tusc. Quæst.*, i, 10.)

* Mr. Lobdell, missionary of the American Board, who visited Sheikh Adi in October 1852, on the occasion of the annual festival of the Izedis at that place, says, "There was music and dancing every night during the festival, before Melek Taos, King Peacock, or the devil's image, as one of the sheikhs privately informed me." One of the chief priests accounted to him for the devil's being called Melek Taus or Taos, as follows:—

"When Christ was on the cross, in the absence of his friends, the devil in the fashion of a dervish took him down, and carried him to heaven. The Marys soon came, and seeing that their Lord was not there, inquired of the dervish where he was. They would not believe his answer; but they promised to do so, if he would take the pieces of a cooked chicken from which he was eating, and bring the animal to life. He assented to the proposal; and, bringing back bone to his bone, the cock crew! The dervish then announced his real character, and they expressed their astonishment by a burst of adoration. Having informed them that he would thenceforth always appear to his beloved in the shape of a beautiful bird, he departed."

The only thing that would appear from this absurd myth is that the Izedis do not look upon the bird as a peacock, but as a cock.

The writer was, on the occasion of his visit to Sheikh Adi, unsuccessful in obtaining any information in regard to this bird worship. It appears, indeed, that the greatest secrecy and reserve are observed by the Izedis with respect to the worship of this symbol. When Mr. Layard, at a subsequent period, attended the annual festival of the Izedis at the same place, although he was regarded by them as their friend and protector, still he was not allowed to see the sacred symbol.

"Some ceremony," he relates, "took place before I joined the assembly at the tomb, at which no stranger can be present, nor could I learn its nature from the Kawals. Sheikh Nasr gave me to understand that their holy symbol, the Malek Taus, was then exhibited to the priests, and he declared that, as far as he was concerned, he had no objection to my witnessing the whole of their rites; but many of the Sheikhs were averse to it, and he did not wish to create any ill-feeling in the tribe." (*Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. i, pp. 293-294.)

It appears from the same authority that there is some association of ideas in existence among the Izedis between the Devil and the Melek Tâus. "When they speak of the Devil," says Layard, "they do so with reverence as Malik Taus, 'King Peacock,' or Malik al Kut, 'the Mighty Angel.'"*

Dr. Forbes says, "At the village of Sheikh Adi is the figure of a peacock in brass, called Malik Taus (King Peacock), which is venerated as the emblem or representative of David and Solomon, to whom they (the Izedis) offer sacrifices, and of whom there are images near the Malik Taus.

When Layard returned to Assyria in 1848-49, in company with the Kawal Yusuf, bearer of an Imperial firman giving the Izedis equal rights with Mussulmans, a complete toleration of their religion, and relief from the much-dreaded laws of conscription, there was nothing that these poor persecuted people would not almost have done for him.

Being in Redwan, a town in Kharzan, part of ancient Armenia, on the upper Tigris, at the time that the Kawals were collecting the revenues, upon which occasion they always have with them their national symbol the Melek Tâus, he asked to see the mysterious figure, and was not refused. "I was conducted," he relates, "early in the morning into a dark inner room in Nazi's house. It was some time before my eyes had become sufficiently accustomed to the dim light to distinguish an object, from which a large red coverlet had been raised on my entry. The Kawals drew near with every sign of respect, bowing and kissing the corner of the cloth in which

* Here, as in all other instances when quoting, the orthography used by the writer is adhered to.

it was placed. A stand of bright copper or brass, in shape like the candlesticks generally used in Musul and Baghdad, was surmounted by the rude image of a bird in the same metal, and more like an Indian or Mexican idol than a cock or peacock. Its peculiar workmanship indicated some antiquity, but I could see no traces of inscription upon it."

This, it is to be understood, was only a copy of the original symbol or banner of the tribe kept at Sheikh Adi. Layard tells us there are four such images, one for each district visited by the Kawals.

The Izedis declare that, notwithstanding the frequent wars and massacres to which the sect has been exposed, and the plunder and murder of the priests during their journeys, no Melek Tâus has ever fallen into the hands of the Mussulmans. Kawal Yusuf, once crossing the desert on a mission to Sinjar, and seeing a body of Bedwin horsemen in the distance, buried the Melik Taus. Having been robbed and then left by the Arabs, he dug it up, and carried it in safety to its destination.

Not the least interesting fact associated with the existence of this strange ornithological symbol is the connexion that is manifest between it and certain sacred symbols found carved on the rocks at Bavian, near Sheikh Adi. In the latter we have simple or ornamented stands, staffs, or cylinders, bearing the ram's head, sacred among the Izedis as well as the Assyrians, bulls' heads, and the fir cone, citron, or other well known conical emblem. In the Melek Tâus, we have a bird instead of the more common Assyrian symbols; and, for want of a better, a modern brass candlestick is made to serve for a pedestal or staff. Perhaps it is not so in the original at Sheikh Adi. Still, the evident connexion between this modern symbol and the more ancient sacred symbols of the Assyrians sculptured on the Royal Tablets at Bavian, tends to identify still more closely the Izedis with their predecessors in the same country. And the very fact of these sculptures being met with in the vicinity of their chief sanctuary, and where they keep their sacred banner, lends additional strength to this view of the subject.

With one exception, all travellers agree that, whatever may be the reading of Melek Tâus, king or angel, cock or peacock (and the poor ignorant and superstitious Izedis may confound the four), that the bird symbol is associated with the Evil Spirit.

That exception is Dr. Grant, who, on the contrary, asserts that the angel of light, or good principle, is represented by the Melek Tâus; and he remarks that it is represented not by a peacock but by a cock, that bird being the harbinger of day.

It is not, however, solely from its association with old Assyrian

symbol worship, as depicted on the neighbouring rocks of Bavian, that we would deduce the pre-Magian or Persian origin of this bird-worship, but other circumstances come to the support of this view of the subject.

The idol of the Cuthites, called Nergal in 2 Kings xvii, 30, has been identified by the Rabbinical commentators with the cock. The Babylonian Talmudic treatise Sanhedrin (fol. 63, p. 2) offers the following explanation of the passage which states that the men of Kuth made Nergal their god. "And what was it? A cock."

Another Rabbinical allusion to the cock, as connected with the evil principle, is the following, which is taken from the same Talmudic treatise, Beracoth (fol. 6, p. 2): "He that wisheth to know them (the evil spirits) let him take sieved ashes, and lay them on the bed, and in the morning he will perceive thereon footsteps of a cock."

This identification has been disputed by Nerberg, Gesenius, and other inquirers into the astrolatry of the Assyrians and Chaldæans, and who consider that the idol represented Mars. The two conjectures are not inconsistent with one another, for the harbinger of day has been from remote times associated with the worship of the god of war.

According to Professor Movers, in his valuable work *Die Religion der Phœnizier*, p. 423, the cock was the symbol of the planet Mars, from the fact of the combative propensity of this bird, which therefore constituted him the type of the god of war. Movers considers the word as a co-ordinate form of another, which signifies an axe, and we have a representation of the latter on the lintel of the door at Sheikh Adi. (Compare the Syriac translation in Deut. xix, 5, and Matthew iii, 10.)

It has lately been argued, however, by Dr. Jolowicz, that the cock worship of the Cuthites had nothing to do with Mars, but that it was a Moloch cultus, comprising the sacrifice of children. Dr. Jolowicz argues, in favour of this view of the subject, that the Talmud classified the cock among the demons on account of its lustful propensities; that the Izedis at the present day call their deified cock Melek Tâus, in which the term Moloch is plainly discernible; and because the Assyrian coins show the representation of Dagon together with Nergal (the fish and the cock), he says there is little doubt but that both gods thus placed together represent the Phallus and Moloch worship.

There is no doubt that the Satanic associations connected with the Melek Tâus lend some countenance to the view entertained by Dr. Jolowicz, but they are not borne out by the other bearings of the question.

The word Nergal, for example, contains the Cuthian (ancient Mede and Persian) word for fire, as well as the Sabian name for Mars, according to Nerberg and Gesenius. Van Bohlen finds the name also in the Sanscrit Nrigal, "man devourer," spoken of a fierce warrior, and corresponding to Merodach, the Mars of the Assyrians and Chaldæans. (Gesenius, *Thesaur.* p. 913, and *Comment. zu Jesu*, ii, p. 344.)

The word is also traceable in a variety of forms, all having reference more or less to the same idea. Thus Nergal Sharezer, prince of fire (Jer. xxxix, 3), Boanerges, son of thunder (Mark iii, 17), Anerges or Astara, of the dynasty of Phanagoria (Dubois de Montpereux, tome v, p. 59.). Nur in the Arabic, as Kalah en Nur, Castle of Light, and Jebel en Nur, Mountain of Light, in Cilicia, and Nurhag, or fire temple, in Sardinia.

The site of the city of the Cuthites, in Babylonia, called by the Hebrews Kuth or Cutha, and by Abu Muhammed, in his *Universal History*, Kutha, has been for some time proximatively known to archæologists (*Res. in Assyria*, p. 165). Dr. Julius Oppert believes the mound which constitutes the north-east corner of the boundaries of ancient Babylon, and which is in the present day called Oheimer, to be the actual ruins of the Temple of Nergal. (*Trans. of the Hist. Soc. of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. viii, p. 97.)

There seems little doubt that the cock symbol was not confined to the temple of the Cuthites, but was known extensively among the Chaldæans and Assyrians, for it is met with on several Assyrian cylinders. A gem has been figured by Mr. Layard, being an agate cone, upon the base of which is engraved a winged priest or deity, standing in an attitude of prayer before a cock on an altar. On a cylinder in the British Museum, a priest is represented, wearing the sacrificial dress, standing at a table before an altar bearing a crescent, and a smaller altar, on which stands a cock.

The cock may indeed be considered at the head of what were known in antiquity as Iynges or sacred birds, and more particularly connected with the Assyrian as well as Babylonian religions. They were a kind of demons who exercised a peculiar influence over mankind, resembling the Ferouher of the Zoroastrian system. (Ignatius *de Insomn.*, p. 134, ed. Patav. Schol. Niceph.) The oracles attributed to Zoroaster describe them as powers animated by God—

"Νοοῦμεναι ἑνῶντες πατρίθεν νοέουσι καὶ αὐταὶ
Βουλῆς ἀφθέγκτοισι κινούμεναι ὥστε νοῆσαι."

(The intelligible Iynges themselves understand from the Father;
By ineffable counsels being moved so as to understand.)

Psell. 41; Plet. 31.

(Zoroaster, *Oracul. Magn. ad calcem Oracul. Sybill.*, ed. Gall.,

p. 80, and Cory's *Fragments*, p. 250.) Their images, made of gold, were in the palace of the King of Babylon, according to Philostratus (lib. i, c. 25, and lib. vi, c. 2.). They were connected with magic. (Selden *de Dis Syriis*, p. 39.) It is possible that the bird borne by warriors, in a bas relief from the ruins of the central palace of Nimrud, may represent the Iynges. Layard has given a representation of this bird in *Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. ii, p. 462. This figure, he adds, may, however, resemble the golden eagle carried before the Persian monarchs. (Xenophon, *Cyroped.* lib. vii; *Anab.* lib. ix; Quintus Curtius, lib. iii, c. 3.)

It is not the place here to enter upon the much vexed question as to the locality of the land of Cush, rendered in the Vulgate Ethiopia. As Cush was the eldest son of Ham, he must have had a primary settlement in the land of Babel, before his descendants went forth to people Arabia, or emigrate across the Red Sea to Ethiopia Proper. Nimrod was also a descendant of Cush, and he would have taken with him to the land of Asshur the idols of the Babylonian Cushites. Shalmaneser transplanted Cushites or Cuthites from Asia into the land of Israel, which he had desolated. (2 Kings xvii, 24-30.) From the intermixture of these colonists with the remaining natives sprung the Samaritans, who are called Cuthites in the Chaldee and in the Talmud, and, for the same reason, a number of non-Semitic words which occur in the Samaritan dialect are called Cuthian.

The Hamitic or Scythic element, which prevails in the most ancient cuneiform records throughout Babylonia and Susiana, has induced Sir Henry Rawlinson, the eminent decipherer of these inscriptions, to believe that in the earliest ages, previous to the historic period (which commenced with the empire of Nimrod), the Semitic race which dwelt in the region north of the Persian Gulf was gradually dispossessed by a powerful stream of invasion or colonization from the south, and that the said Hamitic or Scythic element pointed to Ethiopia as the mother country of the new settlers.

It is, however, well deserving of consideration how much the existence of a Hamitic race in the heart of Chaldæa, extending itself to Assyria on the one hand, to Susiana on the other, and even transported into Israel, may have had to do with this original Scythic element in the oldest cuneiform inscriptions; and if we do not invert the real state of things by supposing an Ethiopic invasion subsequent to a Semitic peopling by descendants of Shem. It is more probable, as advocated by most Biblical scholars, that the Cuthites peopled Susiana, Arabia, parts of Assyria, and Africa, than that Africans came to people their original country.

However this may be, the Izedis have, by their language and by their characteristic Nergal worship, a nearer relationship to the Cuthite Babylonians—the descendants of Ham and of Nimrod—than to the Semitic Babylonians; and this is precisely what might be expected of an ancient people dwelling in Assyria Proper. In the Khaldis, Chaldæans, or Nestorian Christians, we find apparently the representatives of the other race—the descendants of Semitic Chaldæans or Assyrians.

Mr. Fraser remarks in his little work on *Mesopotamia and Assyria* (ed. of 1842, p. 327) of the Izedis, that they pay regard to sundry images of animals; to that of the serpent, in memory of the seduction of Eve by that reptile, and to that of the ram, in remembrance of the obedience of Abraham.

When the writer visited Sheikh Adi, in 1846, he was much struck by finding rudely carved in the lintel of the doorway of the principal edifice a snake, an unknown animal, and a hatchet. It was impossible not to perceive that this rude carving of a snake, painted black, in such a place, was strongly corroborative of what had been reported of the regard paid to this well known symbol of evil.

Mr. Layard, who has since visited and explored this sanctuary more frequently and leisurely, discovered also carvings of a man and a comb. The animal he detected to be a lion. "Although," he says, "it might be suspected that these figures were emblematic, I could obtain no other explanation from Sheikh Nasr than that they had been cut by the Christian mason who repaired the tomb some years ago, as ornaments suggested by his mere fancy." *Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. i, p. 282. The reserve observed in this matter can, however, be readily understood.

The Sheikh was exceedingly anxious not to offend the prejudices of his guest. This was particularly manifest in his carefully avoiding all allusions so the Evil Spirit. Yet an accident brought all the acuteness of their feelings upon this subject into full play. Whilst Mr. Layard was seated in the court, a boy had forced himself to the very end of a weak bough, immediately over the visitor's head, and threatened every moment to break under his weight. As he looked up, he saw the impending danger, and he made an effort, by an appeal to the chief, to avert it. "Is that young Shait"—he exclaimed, about to use an epithet in common use in the East, but he checked himself immediately. But, he says, it was too late; half the dreaded word had escaped. The effect was instantaneous; a look of horror seized those who were near enough to overhear him, and it was quickly communicated to those beyond. The pleasant smile which usually played upon

the fine features of the young Bey gave way to a serious and angry expression.

Nothing can be more manifest than this regard for the Evil Spirit, and it is not likely that the Izedis would have permitted the carvings in question without a reason or without a sanction.

In the monuments at Konyunjik, which refer to the later Assyrian period after fire worship was introduced, two serpents attached to poles are seen as emblems or symbols, associated with two eunuchs, who are standing before an altar upon which is the sacred fire. This sculpture is figured in Layard's *Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. ii, p. 469. Hera, the same as Astarta, Mylitta, or Venus, held a serpent in one hand, and so she is represented in the Egyptian tablet of Ken, or Hera, in the British Museum, and figured by Layard (*Nin.*, vol. ii, p. 212). Serpents were also emblems of the goddess Rhea, as we see in Diodorus and the rock sculptures of Malthaiyah. Ophiolatry no doubt existed, under one form or another, among the Assyrians, as among all ancient nations; and, with the creeping in of corrupt ideas and practices, may like other things, as argued by Landseer in his *Sabæan Researches*, have assumed an astronomical character.

In reference to another carved symbol, the axe or hatchet, it may be observed that it was the attribute of the Baal or Belus of the Assyrians. This is particularly noticed in a passage in the Epistle of Jeremiah; "He hath also in his right hand a dagger and an axe;" and it is illustrated by a bas relief, probably of the later Assyrian period, discovered in the ruins of the south-west palace at Nimrud, and figured by Layard (*Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. ii, p. 456), in which a procession of warriors are carrying on their shoulders four images, one of which appears to be Baal, holding a hatchet in one hand and a bundle of sticks in the other.

It is further illustrated by an Assyrian cylinder, engraved in the *Athenæum Français* for the 5th of January, 1856, and which represents a priest making offerings to a deity, represented under the form of a hatchet.*

The lion, it is almost needless to remark, was an Assyrian emblem; but with regard to the comb, it would be difficult to

* We find four snakes in the Egyptian hieroglyphs: the Uraeus, emblem of divinity or royalty; the Cerastes, representing the letter F; a Python, representing the letter M; and a Boa, representing the letter L. But still, as Mr. Sharpe remarks (on the triple mummy case of Aroreriao, p. 20), both in the sculptures and pictures the latter is known early and late as the type of sin and wickedness, the enemy of the human race; and in particular in later times, as opposed to the uræus with the swollen crest (cobra capella), which was the type of goodness.

The axe or hatchet invariably represented in hieroglyphs the word God. Baal or Baal was represented by an eye—"the eye of providence."

venture a surmise, except it were that the rude carving was meant to represent something which has been taken for a comb.

It does not appear who was the first to bring against the Izedis the charge adduced against several sects in Western Asia, of putting out the lights upon the occasion of certain festivals, and indulging in indiscriminate intercourse. Those who are said to indulge in such abominable practices have been called Chiraok Kush or Chirajh Sundiran, "Extinguishers of Lights."* Such a charge, however, the writer was led at once, from what little opportunity he had of observing the character of these persecuted people, to denounce as having all the appearance of being "a base calumny, assailing human nature in general, while aimed against the poor Izedis in particular" (*Trav. and Res.*, vol. ii, p. 185); and it is gratifying to find that Mr. Layard, who enjoyed much more extensive opportunities of observing the same people, sides with this view of the subject. "The mysteries of the sect", says Layard, "have been traced to the worship introduced by Semiramis into the very mountains they now inhabit,—a worship which, impure in its forms, led to every excess of debauchery and lust. The quiet and inoffensive demeanour of the Yezidis, and the cleanliness and order of their villages, do not certainly warrant these charges."

In another place, describing the picturesque and striking practices at the great annual festival at Sheikh Adi, he says, "Thus were probably celebrated ages ago the mysterious rites of the Corybantes, when they met in some consecrated grove. I did not marvel that such wild ceremonies had given rise to those stories of unhallowed rites and obscene mysteries which have rendered the name of Yezidi an abomination in the East. Notwithstanding the uncontrollable excitement which appeared to prevail amongst all present, there were no indecent gestures or unseemly ceremonies. When the musicians and singers were exhausted, the noise suddenly died away; the various groups resumed their previous cheerfulness, and again wandered through the valley, or seated themselves under the trees."

"So far," adds the same authority, "from Sheikh Adi being the scene of the orgies attributed to the Yezidis, the whole valley is held sacred, and no acts, such as the Jewish law has declared to be impure, are permitted within the sacred precincts."

* Dr. Frederick Forbes says, in *Journal of Royal Geo. Society*, vol. ix, p. 425, "On the tenth day of the moon, in the month of August, they hold a meeting at the tomb of Sheikh Adi, which lasts a day and a night, and at which all the married women and men assemble. After dark the lights are extinguished, and they hold promiscuous intercourse till morning." This was probably from some Mussulman authority.

Near the mausoleum of Sheikh Adi, there existed a low edifice, neatly constructed, and, like all the sacred edifices of the Izedis, kept as pure as repeated coats of whitewash can make it. It is called the Sanctuary of Sheikh Shems, or "of the Sun;" and it is so built that the first rays of that luminary should as frequently as possible fall upon it. At the great annual festival white oxen are sacrificed to Sheikh Shems, and their flesh is distributed among the poor. "The dedication of the bull to the sun," Mr. Layard remarks, "so generally recognised in the religious systems of the ancients, probably originated in Assyria, and the Izedis may have unconsciously preserved a myth of their ancestors." (*Nineveh and its Remains*, vol. i, p. 289.)

The idea of a myth *unconsciously* preserved is very much opposed to Mr. Layard's notions of the Izedi devotedness to their faith. Elsewhere (p. 277) he says, "Their devotion to their religion is no less remarkable than that of the Jews; and I remember no instance of a person of full age renouncing his faith. They invariably prefer death, and submit with resignation to the tortures inflicted upon them. Even children of tender age, although educated in Turkish harems, and nominally professing the Mussulman religion, have frequently retained in secret the peculiar doctrines of the sect, and have been in communication with Izedi priests." A people so steadfast to the faith of their ancestors are not likely to have preserved a myth unconsciously; on the contrary, the preservation of this and other myths tends to throw a remarkable light upon whom those ancestors, as shadowed forth by Mr. Layard, are likely to have been.

The lighting up of Sheikh Adi, and the illumination of the neighbourhood at the great annual festival, are attended by circumstances which exhibit manifest traces of fire worship. At twilight the Fakirs issue from the mausoleum to fill and trim lamps, placed in niches in the walls of the court yard, and scattered over the buildings on the side of the valley, and even on isolated rocks and in the hollow trunks of trees. Innumerable stars appear to glitter on the sides of the mountain, and in the dark recesses of the forest. As the guardians of the sacred fires make their way through the crowd to perform their task, men and women pass their right hands through the flames; and after rubbing the right eye-brow with the part which had been purified by the sacred element, they devoutly carried it to their lips. Some, Layard describes, who bore children in their arms, anointed them in like manner; whilst others held out their hands to be touched by those who, less fortunate than themselves, could not reach the flame.

The lamps are votive offerings from pilgrims, or from those

who have appealed to Sheikh Adi in times of danger or disease. A yearly sum is given to the guardians of the tomb for oil, and for the support of the priests who tend the lamps. They are lighted every evening as long as the supplies last. In the day time the smoked walls mark the places where they are placed, and Layard says he has observed the Izedis devoutly kissing the blackened stones.

Upon the occasion of his second visit to Sheikh Adi, the Kawal Yusuf confirmed to Mr. Layard the fact of the small Ziyarah being dedicated to the sun, who, he said, is called by the Izedis Wakil al Ardh, "the Lieutenant or Governor of the World." But he denied that they had any particular reverence for fire; the people, he said, passed their hands through the flame of the lamps merely because they belong to the tomb. This statement of the Kawal is, however, manifestly contradicted by the practices of the Izedis. The same priest declared also that their Kablah was the Polar Star, and not the East. This may be, but the evidences of adoration of the sun are too numerous to admit of doubt.

Nothing, indeed, more clearly results from the observations of different travellers than that the Izedis bow in adoration before the rising sun, and kiss his first rays when they strike on a wall or other object near them, like those of other

" Eastern realms, where early Persians run
To greet the bless'd appearance of the sun."

Ovid, i, 75.

Mr. Forbes seems to have thought that this adoration of the sun was symbolical of Jesus Christ, but there is nothing to justify such a supposition. We have, indeed, in the rites performed at the annual festival at Sheikh Adi—the votive lamps and their hereditary guardians—the ceremonies observed upon their being lighted up and the reverence paid to them, even to passing the hand through them and kissing the member thus consecrated, as well as in the worship of the sun, remnants—just as much of the Cuthite or Nergal worship—as of that Magian religion which was introduced after its reform by Zardusht or Zoroaster among the Assyrians.

Layard believes that the religion of the early Assyrians was a pure Sabæanism, in which the heavenly bodies were worshipped as mere types of the power and attributes of the Supreme Deity.

The worship of fire, a corruption of Sabæanism, the same authority tells us, originated or generally prevailed in Assyria about the time of the building of the Khorsabad and Koujunjik edifices.

Dr. Grant pointed out that the system of faiths of the Izedis

had points of strong resemblance to the ancient Manichean heresy ; and it is probable, he said, that they are a remnant of that heretical sect. This idea, he further argues, derives support from the fact that they seem to have originated in the region where Manes first laboured and propagated his tenets with the greatest success ; and from the coincidence of the name of their reputed founder or most revered teacher, Adde, with an active disciple of Manes, of the same name and place of abode.

These suggestions are worthy of consideration and investigation, for it is impossible, notwithstanding Haxthausen's assertion that their religion is not of Parsee origin (for with them Satan is not like Ahriman, a personification of the Evil Principle), not to feel that it is more than likely that their notions of the Evil Being were, in part at least, derived from the Ahriman of the ancient Magi (not wholly so, or they would have also the Good Principle in opposition) and from the secondary or Evil Deity of the Manicheans, which was evidently engrafted on the Oriental philosophy, and is, indeed, to be met with in most of the earlier Arabian Muhammedan writers. The connexion established between Sheikh Adi and Adde, the Manichean teacher, is the more remarkable, as the history of their teacher, and even the date of his existence, have been almost lost by this persecuted sect. It is easy to understand, should such be the case, how the title of Sheikh has been superadded, as it has ridiculously enough in the case of the sun, who appears to be personified among these poor ignorant people by a Sheikh Shems !

Sheikh Nasr informed Layard that the Izedis had a date of their own, and that he believed we were then, according to their account, in the year 1550. This, he remarked, suggested some connection with Manes ; but he could not ascertain, either by direct or indirect questions, that they were acquainted with the name, or recognised him in any wise as the originator of their peculiar doctrines with regard to the Evil Principle.

These, in fact, seem, as before said, to be in their origin of far more remote antiquity, and date back to early Cuthite times.

Mr. Rich states, among other things, that the Izedis believe in the metempsychosis, never saying "such a one is dead," but "he is changed." This doctrine was a part of most of the religious systems of antiquity, Chaldæan, Assyrian, Egyptian, and Hindhu.

Dr. Grant advocates a Jewish origin to the Izedis. He argues that they, as well as the Khaldis, or Nestorian Christians, are all the descendants of the lost ten tribes.

The first evidence adduced in support of this position, is their practice of that remarkable rite of the Abrahamic covenant, circumcision. But, in answer to this, it is sufficient to observe

that Forbes did not find that this rite, common to Mussulmans, as well as to Jews, was any where in practice amongst the Izedis of Sinjar; and Haxthausen says, that the Russian Izedis not only did not practise circumcision, but despised the rite, because it was that of their enemies, the Muhammedans and the Jews. It appears to be sometimes practised by the Izedis of Kurdistan, but Layard ascertained, on his second visit, that it is optional among them.

The second proof is derived from the practice among the Izedis of offering sacrifices, a practice which was quite as much Assyrian as it was Jewish.

The third is the observance of the Passover or Easter festival, which Haxthausen thought was a Christian observance; but it is probably, with the Izedis, of neither Jewish nor Christian origin. The Easter festival was no doubt an ancient pagan observance.

A fourth argument is derived from their abstinence from meats prohibited to the Jews. But abstinence from pork is as much a Muhammedan practice as a Jewish one. And their Hebrew descent can no more be deduced from such an abstinence, almost essential to health in some climates, than can their descent from the followers of Yezid from their abstinence from lettuces, because an absurd tradition exists that Husain was slain in a garden full of such vegetables.

The testimony of a Chaldæan author is more to the purpose, but even upon this, no greater reliance can be placed than upon the authority of Assemani, who traces their origin to the Persians, or of the Turkish author of the *Jihan Numa*, who upholds the usual Muhammedan tradition of their descent from the Arabian followers of Yezid.

Dr. Grant, in his anxiety to identify the Chaldæans of the Nestorian Church, and the Izedi Assyrians, with the lost ten tribes, identifies Halah of the captivity, a city of Media, upon the river Gozan, with Hatareh, an Izedi village. To corroborate this, he assumes the identity of Halah, and Calah, which latter city Sir Henry Rawlinson has ascertained from the inscriptions to be represented by the ruins of Nimrud. Resen, Dr. Grant also identifies with Ras al Ain, between Hatareh and Nineveh (not the Ras al Ain of Sinjar, the Roman Resaina); whereas, Sir Henry Rawlinson identifies the same primeval city with Kalah Shirgat,—others having perhaps with equal plausibility sought for it at Nimrud—the Larissa of Xenophon.

Dr. Grant himself admits that the remains of Sabæanism, found among the Izedis, militates against the idea of their Hebrew origin; and, indeed, the proofs he advances in favour of such an idea will scarcely bear serious discussion.

Layard simply says "that he could not trace the Hebrew descent of the Izedis, which Dr. Grant could discover in them, as well as in almost every other sect in Assyria."

Haxthausen also remarks that "it does not appear that any vestiges of the Jewish law or rites exist amongst them, though it has been asserted that they hold in reverence the First Book of Moses."

A very interesting consideration, as opening a field for missionary labour, is the high regard which the Izedis entertain towards the Christian religion. Dr. Grant even says, that, in some sense, at least, they believe in Christ as a Saviour. They practise the rite of baptism, make the sign of the cross so emblematical of Christianity in the east, put off their shoes, and kiss the threshold when they enter a Christian church; and it is said they often speak of wine as the blood of Christ, holding the cup up with both hands, after the sacramental manner of the east, when drinking it; and if a drop chance to fall on the ground, they lick it up with religious care.

The fact of the Izedis putting off their shoes, and kissing the threshold of a Christian church before entering, was noticed by Mr. Rich, and was corroborated by Mr. Buckingham, who says that "whenever the Izedis of Sinjar come to Mardin, and other places, they kiss the hands of the priests, and receive the sacrament from them, suffering not a drop of the wine to fall to the ground, or even on their beards while drinking it."

Layard also describes the Izedis as chanting at the great annual festival, at Sheikh Adi, the Makam Azerat Esau, or the song of the angel Jesus. They are said to expect the second coming of Christ, and they reverence the New Testament, but not so much as the Kuran.

Their year begins with that of the eastern Christians, whom they follow also in the order and names of the months. They do not, however, keep the Christian sabbath.

Forbes corroborates, with regard to the Izedis of Sinjar, that they occasionally visit the Christian churches and monasteries, and present offerings there on account of recovery from sickness, or escape from danger; they also kiss the superior's hand.

From information obtained at his second journey, Layard says, that they believe that Christ will come to govern the world; but that after him, Sheikh Madhi will appear, to whom will be given special jurisdiction over those speaking the Kurdish language, including the Izedis: but this, Layard remarks, is evidently a modern interpolation derived from Mussulman sources, perhaps invented to conciliate the Muhammedans. The fact is, that their Christianity and Muhammedanism are alike doubtful: and whatever exists of either,

is probably merely superimposed upon their fire and devil worship, by imitative habit, and for purposes of conciliation. For example, they exclude Muhammedans from all future life, but not Christians. But this latter reserve, Layard himself acknowledges, may have been said merely to avoid offence.

Haxthausen asserts of the Russian Izedis, that they declared their belief in one God, and added that they regarded Jesus as the Son of God, and venerated Mary, the mother of Jesus, with certain holy men. Amongst the rest, Surb Kework (evidently St. George, whom the Armenians also honour under the name of St. Mogni), sometimes going on pilgrimage to the monastery of that saint in Armenia.

The same authority further says, that though the Izedis designate Christ as the Son of God, they do not recognise his divinity. The acknowledgment then must, on their part, be only a portion of that system of temporising, which seems to be characteristic of these unfortunate and persecuted people. Hence it is, that there is so much that is contradictory in the statements of different travellers. As to the rite of baptism, by immersion in a holy well, it appears to have been in practice among the Assyrians before the coming of our Saviour.

Although the Muhammedans, Sunnis, and Shi'ahs alike repudiate the Izedis, the latter do not reject the Kuran, although, like the New Testament, they consider both less entitled to their veneration than the Old Testament. Their names are uniformly those of Mussulmans, and they select passages from the Kuran for their tombs and holy places. They look upon Muhammed as a prophet, as they do Abraham, and the patriarchs. They do not, however, keep the Moslem, any more than the Christian sabbath; nor do they observe the festival of the Ramazan. Forbes says, that the Izedis use nearly the same oaths as the Turks, Christians, and Jews indiscriminately; but that which to them is most binding, is to swear by the standard of Yezid. It is very likely, however, that his informant was a Mussulman.

The teachings of a certain Mirza Muhammed are also said to be propounded by the Izedi Sheikhs. Yet, with all this, it appears that as before stated, with the selfishness that characterises most peculiar faiths, they exclude Muhammedans from future life. Whatever there is, then, of Muhammedanism, among the Izedis, may fairly be attributed to the influence acquired over them by a few zealous or pious Sheikhs, whose history is not well known; to habits of imitation; to their dwelling now so many years among Mussulman populations; and to the desire of averting persecution and oppression at the hands of their hereditary enemies. All these influences com-

bined, have not, however, sufficed to make them adopt Muhammed as the only prophet of God. "They are not a Muhammedan sect," says Haxthausen, "for they despise Muhammed and his doctrines."

The Turkish historian, Haji Khalfah, gives the following account of the Izedis in the Jihan Numa, or Spectacle of the World. "The Yezids reckon themselves disciples of Sheikh Adi or Hadi, who was one of the Merwanian Khalifs. The Yezids were originally Sufites, who have fallen into error and darkness. Those whom they call their Sheikhs, wear black turbans, whence they are called Kara Bash (black heads); they never hide their women. They buy places in Paradise from their Sheikhs, and on no account curse the Devil or Yezid. The Sheikh Hadi has made our fast and prayer a part of their abominable faith, and they say, that at the day of judgment he will cause numbers to enter into Paradise. They have a great enmity to the doctors of law."

This name of Yezids, or Yezidis, which they receive from the Muhammedans, has given origin to a commonly received opinion, that these people are the descendants of those Arabs who, under the directions of Shummur, the servant or follower of Yezid ben Muawiyah, put Hassan, the son of Ali, to death. This belief is strengthened among some by Shummur being regarded by them in the light of a great saint; hence, whatever Muhammedanism there is mixed up with their other tenets, partakes more of the Sunni or orthodox character than of the Shi'ah or Ali worship, so much so, that the Persians and other Shi'ahs hold it meritorious to kill any of the sect.

But Layard justly remarks that there is reason to believe that the name must be sought for elsewhere, as it was used long before this introduction of Muhammedanism, and is not without connection with the early Persian appellation of the supreme being.

Kawal Yusuf, for example, asserted that amongst the Izedis, the ancient name for God was Azed, and from it he derived the name of his sect. This corresponds precisely with the statement made by Assemani, who traces the origin of the word Yezidi, from Yezid, which he says in the idiom of Persia signifies God. Yezidi, the plural of Yezid, indicating the observers of superstitious doctrine.

Another origin has been given to the name, viz.—from Ized Ferfer, one of the attendants, according to the Parsis, upon the evil spirit. The evil spirit is also said to be called by them Ized.

Sir Henry Rawlinson, speaking of a position held by Heraclius beyond the lesser Zab, and which is designated as Iesdem

both by Theophanes and in the emperor's own letter to the senate, concludes the place to have been a settlement of those whom he calls the heretical Izedis, "or, as they were afterwards named by the Muhammedans, Yezidis." (*Journal of Roy. Geog. Soc.*, vol. x, p. 92.)

The Izedis have, according to Layard, a tradition that they originally came from Basrah, and from the country watered by the lower part of the Euphrates; and that after their emigration they first settled in Syria, and subsequently took possession of the Sinjar hills, and the districts they now inhabit in Kurdistan.

This tradition, Layard remarks, with the peculiar nature of their tenets and ceremonies, points to a Sabæan or Chaldæan origin. It is not improbable, says the same writer further on, that the sect may be a relic of the ancient Chaldees, who have at various times outwardly adopted the forms and tenets of the ruling people to save themselves from persecution and oppression, and have gradually, through ignorance, confounded them with their own belief and mode of worship. Such has been the case with a no less remarkable sect, the Sabæans or Mandai (the Christians of St. John, as they are commonly called), who still inhabit the banks of the Euphrates and the districts of ancient Susiana.

Forbes also, speaking of the Sinjarlis, although carried away by the commonly received opinion of the Izedis deriving their origin and name from Yezid, the son of Muawiyah, remarks that it is probable that they originally dwelt in Babylonia and Assyria; but being held in detestation by the Persians, on account of the destruction of the house of Ali by Yezid, and also detested by the Arabs as worshippers of the devil, they were driven into the strong and isolated hills of Sinjar, and the rugged mountains and defiles of Kurdistan. (*Journal of Royal Geographical Society*, vol. ix, p. 424.)

Haxthausen remarks of the Izedis that they are a religious sect, and not a distinct race. They are probably of Kurdish descent, and their religion is an obscured, disfigured Christianity. "They were," he says, "I imagine, originally a Gnostic sect, which in an early age separated or was expelled from the Christian church. Their doctrine of Satan is evidently the Gnostic doctrine of the Demiurgus; the position they assign to Christ reminds us of Arianism."

There are always sufficient analogies to be found in such delicate matters as questions of creed and doctrine, to support almost any conjectural views; but we think we have shewn enough to satisfy reflective minds that whatever there is of Christianity and Muhammedanism in the practice or belief of the Izedis has been superimposed upon more ancient forms.

We have seen that the Izedis have been identified as descendants of the Arab followers of Yezid, by Haji Khalfah; as Persian Yezidis or observers of superstitious doctrines, by Assemani; as remains of the Lost Tribes, by Dr. Grant; as ancient Chaldæans from the Lower Euphrates, by Layard; and as Gnostic Christians, by Haxthausen.

But considering that their chief places of residence are the largest villages in the plain of Nineveh, that there dwells their temporal and spiritual head, and that there is their chief sanctuary and their chief burial place, we are inclined to look for another origin.

The clue to this presumed origin was afforded by the discovery that the neighbourhood of their chief sanctuary and place of pilgrimage was also a most sacred spot, devoted to the religious ceremonies and national sacrifices of the Assyrians of old. Here the late M. Rouet, French consul at Mosul, first met with rock sculptures, which Layard declares to be the most important that have yet been discovered in Assyria. They represent the great king Sennacherib, recording his deeds, and invoking Asshur and the great deities of Assyria; and over the head of the royal Assyrian are the sacred symbols, to which there can be little doubt that the celebrated Melek Taus—the representative of the demon bird of the Assyrians—bears a real analogy.

This analogy is further corroborated by the neighbourhood of the two sacred localities, by the existence at each of holy wells or springs, by the preservation at each of sun and fire worship and the practice of sacrifices; as also by other minor analogies before adverted to.

With both Assyrians and Izedis it is evident that the same animals were sacred. We have the tombs still preserving the peculiarly characteristic terraced form of Assyrian architecture, and we have the people themselves also holding by the cylinders and other relics of the Assyrians of old.

Lastly, this presumed Assyrian origin of the Izedis is further corroborated by the physical aspect of the people, who still preserve in many instances a remarkable analogy to some of the best marked countenances among the Assyrian sculptures, as also in the preservation of ringlets.

If the Assyrian origin of the Izedis were admitted, it would be easy to understand how the sun and fire worship should be traced rather to that source than to any Chaldæan or Sabæan origin; and it is further equally easy to understand how the doctrines of Adde, the disciple of Manes, may have been adopted by the fallen people, just in the same way as in more

recent times their creed and their practices have become affected by Christian and Muhammedan influences alike.

As a relic of the Assyrians of old, they would just as soon as a relic of the ancient Chaldæans have at various times outwardly adopted the forms and tenets of the ruling people, to save themselves from persecution and oppression, and have gradually, through ignorance, confounded them with their own belief and mode of worship. We have possibly descendants of the Chaldæans of old in the Khaldis, now Nestorian Christians. Why should there be no remnant of the still more renowned Assyrians? And, if existing, why should it not be in Assyria Proper, where, among the actual dwellers in and around Nineveh, we find a race resembling in aspect the Assyrians depicted on the monuments of olden times; still adhering to many of the more striking practices of the Assyrians of old—sun and fire worship and sacrifices—and still preserving their national sanctuary with its sacred symbols, analogous to those depicted on the Assyrian royal tablets, in the immediate neighbourhood of what was manifestly also the chief national sanctuary of the ancient Assyrians?

III.—*On Maori Popular Poetry*. By WILLIAM BAILEY BAKER, Esq.

THERE are few subjects more interesting to the ethnological inquirer, or which convey to him a clearer knowledge and perception of the mental condition of a primitive people, their manner of thinking and feeling, than their popular songs. For as Selden truly remarks, “More solid things do not show the complexion of the times so well as ballads.” And though there exist no great epic streams to reflect the general character of Maori poetry, “these popular ballads”, to use the words of an ingenious German writer, “are the sources and fountains which, with their network of rills, water and drain the whole country; and bringing to light what is hidden in the inmost bowels, pour out into lays the secrets of its heart’s blood.”

Maori poetry having as yet no history, any attempt at chronological order must be renounced. A considerable portion of it is, doubtless, comparatively ancient; for many mysterious allusions and long-forgotten words have been handed down, which the most learned priests of the present day cannot interpret or expound. The oldest compositions were evidently brought hither from the land whence they migrated about eight hundred years ago, and doubtless belong to an anterior period.